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IB-112/63
17 June 1963
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MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, B23 Division, NSA

Declass Review by NGA.

ATTENTION:

FROM:

Chief, CIA/PID (NPIC)

SUBJECT:

Study of Rail Facilities from Thanh-Hoa to Son Yeu,
North Vietnam

REFERENCE:

Requirement No. NSA/PO56/R32/63
Project No. C 538/63

1. This memorandum is in response to referenced requirement which requests that a study be made of the proposed bridge site at Thanh-Hoa to determine the level of construction activity; and also to determine if the old abandoned rail roadbed between Thanh-Hoa southward to Son Yeu is being converted to a highway; or, if the rail roadbed is being rehabilitated as a railroad. A detailed study of railroad facilities between Thanh-Hoa and Son Yeu was also requested.

2. A review of aerial photography of [] shows that the bridge north of Thanh-Hoa over the Song Ma, which has been under construction for several years, will still require a considerable amount of work before completion. Graphic NPIC H-2910 shows that both approaches and the west abutment are well advanced in construction. However, the east abutment is not so near completion. The large barge in the stream between the abutments, is probably being used in the preliminary work of the construction of piers to support the future bridge. Graphic NPIC H-2910 also shows that the old rail roadbed south of the bridge construction site is being rehabilitated.

Photos NPIC H-2911 and H-2912 were selected to show that the old rail roadbed is being rehabilitated as a rail line and is not being converted to a two-lane highway. Although there is no signs of any track structure (rails, crossties, etc.), the evidences of railroad construction are very clear. The following salient features are listed in support of this thesis:

a. The single-span steel thru-truss bridge shown on NPIC H-2911 is typical of the railroad bridges in use in North Vietnam and not found in use in North Vietnam as a highway bridge. The bridge is so narrow that it would probably be a highway bottleneck, and in addition, the lighter loads encountered on the highway generally do not warrant this type of heavy steel construction.

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b. The easy graceful curves found on this roadbed, which are a necessary feature of all rail lines, are in sharp contrast with sharper curves found on the adjacent highways.

c. The rail yards under construction, shown on NPIC H-2911 and H-2912 are proof positive that the old rail roadbed south from the Bridge construction site at Thanh-Hoa is not being converted to a two-lane highway; but rather, that the North Vietnamese are well advanced in this sector in rehabilitating the old meter-gage rail line, which has been abandoned since their civil war.

3. The only rail facilities found on the Thanh-Hoa to Son Yeu section were the bridges, all of which are located on the enclosed graphics, and the new building (possible engine house) located in the yard at Thanh-Hoa.

4. The photo analyst on this project was [redacted] who may be contacted on [redacted] should you have further questions regarding this project.

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ENCLOSURES: 3 Briefing Boards
(NPIC H-2910-NPIC H-2912)

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